

of the writings of an earlier naturalist who spent 10 years in New South Wales, and left us an account of his impressions. George Cayley, Sir Joseph Bank's collector, is a fine contrast for his less involved style. Cayley was also an observer of contemporary politics and society—but Dr. Moore is nevertheless perceptive of the influences of our own society on the relict wilderness of the late twentieth century. In his final chapter—the Calm before the Storm—he asks pertinent questions about the apparently conflicting needs of man and nature. Gently does he chide conservationists for their common failing of the tendency to over-sentimentality, which, he points out ultimately only leads to despair.

The book is however all about conserving and nurturing in the noblest possible sense. It is an account by a connoisseur of creation, written with a soft quill and a strong wrist, of a glorious forty acres (16 hectares if you're metrically mad and devoid of a sense of poetry—the two are *not* mutually exclusive) that he sees as temporarily permanent (if I may be excused the paradox). I strongly recommend that it be read by the greenest of conservationists and the most philistine of politico-industrialists. In between these extremes, of course, those of us who have no can to kick would do well to read this beautiful book often and with great care.—BERNARD D'ABRERA.

Notes and Observations

CONCERNING THE SCARCE VAPOURER MOTH: *ORGYIA RECENS* HUEBNER. — My first acquaintance with the elusive Scarce Vapourer dates back to the 1930s when my wife and I found a number of ornate larvae in the vicinity of Hatfield Moor, South Yorkshire, then a happy hunting ground for Lepidoptera, but today, alas, far less so because of destructive fires and excessive peat-cutting. My wife noticed the first of the striking larvae, and called my attention to it. We subsequently found upwards of 20. They varied considerably in size, and in this respect I should mention that the females when mature are always larger than males of the species. I must also add that through not having previously seen larvae of the Scarce Vapourer I was at first uncertain of their identity. I wondered if they belonged to the allied Common Vapourer (*Orgyia antiqua* L.), but soon realised my error, and concluded that the intriguing strangers were indeed of the rarer species—*gonostigma* as it was then known. It is interesting to record that they were feeding on sallow, heather and hawthorn. More larvae were found subsequently on birch, wildrose and meadowsweet.

Reference to the "List of Yorkshire Lepidoptera" by G. T. Porrit, 2nd edition, 1904, led to the brief entry regarding the species as "Very local in the county, including Doncaster and Sheffield". But following the discovery already described, larvae of the Scarce Vapourer continued to be found in large numbers in this part of Yorkshire, including Thorne Moor,

and a locality within three miles of the centre of Doncaster. Further afield, larvae were taken at Skipwith Common, near Selby, at Laughton Forest, North Lincs., and in a few parts of North Notts. There seemed good reason to believe that the species was well established and in no danger of a serious decline in numbers. Such is wishful thinking!

In subsequent years friends visited Doncaster and district to collect larvae of the Scarce Vapourer, among them the late Baron Charles de Worms, who spent a weekend with us. He was delighted to see the handsome larvae in the wild as previously he had reared only larvae supplied by others. In those years of plenty also some other friends tried hopefully to obtain pairings of *O. recens* and *O. antiqua*, but as far as I am aware they had no success. In this respect it should be remembered that the two species normally appear at different times. My own experience has led to the conclusion that in this area of Yorkshire *O. recens* is only single brooded, the moths appearing mainly in the second half of July while *O. antiqua* is on the wing (males only) in late August and September. South refers to *O. recens* being double brooded, but I have seen no proof of this — at least in the wild. Incidentally, of course, *O. recens* passes the winter in the larval stage, hibernating while small, but ova of *O. antiqua* normally remain unhatched until the spring.

More recently the well known lepidopterist, Sir Cyril Clarke, had hopes of obtaining pairings of *O. recens* and an allied species from Japan, but in spite of strenuous efforts we were unfortunately unable to find any larvae of *recens* to help in the experiment. Newly emerged females of the Japanese species were also sent to me by Sir Cyril for assembling, but they failed to attract any males of *O. recens*.

Unfortunately, at the present time *O. recens* is obviously rare in its old South Yorkshire haunts — even if it now exists at all! In spite of more careful searching this year, 1980, by myself and friends, our efforts have so far been unrewarded. Those who study lepidoptera are usually aware of the fluctuations in numbers of many species from year to year, so we must hope that the Scarce Vapourer will again become less scarce. In conclusion let me add that I would welcome comments on this note, especially any that might refer to the present status of *O. recens* in other parts of Britain. — GEORGE E. HYDE, 26 Warrington Drive, Bessacarr, Doncaster, S. Yorkshire DN4 6SS.

THE THADEUS W. HARRIS AND SAMUEL H. SCUDDER PAPERS. — Harris (1795-1856) and Scudder (1837-1911) were two of the most significant and influential nineteenth-century American entomologists, and their work needs no elucidation here. As the location of their papers is not generally known even in the United States, and because both had extensive and important British and Continental contacts, as was usual in that period of extensive trans-marine communication (with many exceptions, American entomology was still partially dependent on the work of European taxonomists), a brief comment on